

**Daniel M. Finley**  
County Executive



December, 2001

Dear Citizens:

As we head into 2002, the economy is uncertain. Like the thousands of families and businesses in the County, Waukesha County government faces challenges and difficult decisions. Families are focusing on their bottom lines and making tough choices when deciding how to spend their hard earned incomes. Waukesha County government will not be any different and this budget is our commitment to live within our means.

This year's budget, themed "Managing for Results," recognizes the issues we face and County governments efforts to address them. We do so by measuring the performance of every program and continue those that succeed, modify those that need changing, and eliminate those that are not performing for the taxpayer.

I am proud to state that this budget, despite the economic slowdown, increased health care costs, and funding reductions from the state, reduces the county tax rate for the 12<sup>th</sup> year in a row. The 2002 property tax rate will drop by 4 cents to \$2.42 per \$1,000 in equalized value. This is the 70<sup>th</sup> lowest tax rate among the 72 Wisconsin counties and the lowest of those counties that do not have a sales tax. As always, Waukesha County has the most stable county budget in Wisconsin. The financial community and bond rating agencies continue to recognize this by awarding the County their highest bond rating of Triple A.

Like families and businesses across the County, we made tough decisions in this budget to hold the line on spending based on performance. Inefficient mass transit routes have been eliminated saving over \$325,000. County funding for the DARE program will be discontinued saving taxpayers over \$300,000 in the next two years. Senior meal sites service has been restructured to better serve our clients and provide savings to the taxpayer.

We also are investing in programs that are benefiting taxpayers. We will open Fox River Park in the Town of Waukesha in July 2002. Funding for specialized transportation is increased to address growing needs of seniors. Technology advancements are proposed to make services more efficient and convenient for the taxpayer.

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Several priority initiatives highlight the 2002 Waukesha County budget. They include:

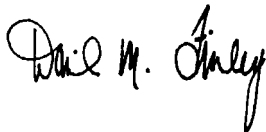
- ❖ A new land recycling initiative by the Department of Parks and Land Use and the County Treasurer designed to identify, clean up and market those tax delinquent properties having redevelopment potential. The goal of the initiative is to return delinquent properties to productive, taxpaying use.
- ❖ The County Materials Recycling Facility budget includes a second dividend payment of \$600,000 to municipalities participating in the County's recycling program.
- ❖ A capital project to construct a consolidated shared dispatch facility is included. Once completed, the facility would be home to all dispatch services in the county. The facility will provide taxpayers a consistent level of service at an annual operating savings of over \$1 million across the county.
- ❖ Additional on-line services for our citizens are scheduled to be launched or first year studies. This includes paying taxes via the web, automating the park system self-reservation fee collection system, and an automated tee time reservation system.
- ❖ Preparation for the Justice Facility expansion continues. Architect and Engineering work will proceed as we head toward beginning construction in 2003 and an opening in 2005.

We recognize our role in promoting and supporting a strong economic climate in the County. To that end, we will invest over \$17.4 million in public works projects to ensure that our highways, facilities, and Crites Field provide the infrastructure backbone of our commerce.

The 2002 Waukesha County budget provides for our citizens today and positions us for the challenges of tomorrow. We address the everyday needs of the health, welfare, and public safety of our citizens. We invest in the future by addressing transportation, parks and open space, the needs of our seniors, and the needs of our youth.

Much work has gone into the 2002 Waukesha County budget. Because of this budget Waukesha County is recognized as a model of fiscal and economic strength throughout the Wisconsin and the United States. You can be assured that this budget builds on our past success and prepares us for the challenges of the future. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel M. Finley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Daniel" and last name "Finley" clearly distinguishable.

Daniel M. Finley  
County Executive